

# Jesus Was Entrusted to a Human Family

## The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40

As we continue to celebrate the Christmas season, I invite us to ponder the truth that Jesus was entrusted to the care, fostering and love of a human family. Jesus' divine nature, embodied in the human condition, was firmly placed under the watchful care of Mary and Joseph. These three persons manifest the feast we celebrate today, the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. All three readings this week point to the value that God places on the importance of family life. The readings call us to a faithful understanding that God must be the fundamental focal point of our own family.

As the first reading says, **"The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying: Fear not, Abram! I am your shield; I will make your reward very great."** Abram (soon to be named Abraham) was called by God to believe and trust in what God was calling him to do. Abram's wife Sarah had been barren, leaving them childless. In his despair, Abram questions God on the value of "his reward" when he is without the gift of new life. God promises a new relationship, a covenant which brings forth descendants more numerous than the stars. **"Abram put his faith in the Lord, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness."** It was not just the birth of Isaac that God made new, but a restored relationship between God and the human race.

The birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, was celebrated just six days ago. This celebration marks an entirely new covenant. This is the covenant that will last forever. God has come to the earth in an entirely new way. God has permeated the very essence of humanity and embedded himself firmly into the fabric of family life. Many in the culture, even in the Christian faith, have put away any memory or décor of the Christmas season. The culture has moved on. Jesus has not. Jesus is here to stay. Our task is to remain open to Christ's indwelling in our hearts, opening ourselves to an entirely new (and renewed) relationship with Jesus.

The gospel portrays Mary and Joseph as devout Jews who obey the Law, presenting their newborn son to God. **"When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord..."** This is an act of faith, a pledge of fidelity to God. We make a similar act of faith when we bring our children to baptism. In our sacramental act, we profess faith in the Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We promise to make our family Christ-centered. We promise before God and community our love for this child and our love for Christ and His Church. As the primary teachers of our children, we are then commissioned to make our home a place of worship, a place where God is ever present. God has entrusted our children into the watchful care of our families. God has grounded us into the larger faith community (family) to help us nurture and support the developing faith of our children.

The feast of the Holy Family continues to celebrate the manifestation of God taking on our human flesh to become one of us. This feast reinforces the significant placement of Jesus within the human family, making the family an essential structure of society. Families matter because they were designed by God to bring forth life to its fullest possible potential. **"When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him."**

God wants nothing less for all of us!

Merry Christmas!

  
Sue Schettler